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IN THE APPLICATION

OF

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FOR A

TOSSING GAME

TOSSING GAME

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Serial No. 60/431,207, filed December 6, 2002.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to outdoor games requiring the accurate and skillful throwing or tossing of objects. More particularly, the invention relates to a tossing game in which two separate target receptacles are buried in the ground at some distance apart, with their upper rims flush with the surface. Players attempt to toss objects into the targets, with points awarded to players according to the accuracy of their pitches.

2. DESCRIPTION OF RELATED ART

A number of pitching and tossing games have been developed over the years, including such classics as horseshoes, quoits, and similar games. Generally speaking, such games involve the placement of two targets at some distance apart, with players attempting to toss one or more objects from the location of one target, to the opposite target.

Such games nearly universally involve the installation of a pair of stakes or the like to serve as the targets for the game. This limits the objects being tossed only to those having a toroid shape (e.g., a quoit or ring), or at least having a semi-closed curvature which is open across a relatively narrow portion of its circumference (e.g., a horseshoe). Smaller tossing objects, such as small discs or washers, are incompatible with such stake-type target games, due to their relatively small size. Even where washers are used, the relatively small size of the center hole is incapable of fitting over the relatively large diameter of the stakes conventionally used in such games, and even if it were possible to fit such washers over the stakes, the accuracy demanded would be nearly impossible to achieve.

Yet, conventional steel washers having an outer diameter on the order of two inches or so, remain as popular objects for various tossing games, due to their economy of purchase and their nearly ideal mass, size, and flat configuration which tends to restrict their ground roll when tossed flat. The present art reflects this desire to use washers in various tossing games, as will be discussed in detail further below. Nonetheless, no suitable tossing game has been developed prior to the development of the present game, which incorporates targets which are economical, easily installed or placed for play, easily removed, and above all, which are well suited as targets when relatively large diameter washers are used as the tossing objects in the game.

The present tossing game responds to this deficiency by providing a game in which the targets comprise cylinders or tubes which are buried in the surface of the playing field or area. The target cylinders for the present tossing game are easily formed of relatively large diameter EMT (electrical metal tubing), PVC (polyvinyl chloride) plastic pipe, or other suitable material, and are buried in the ground with their upper edges substantially flush with the surface. The inner volumes of the cylinders define the target volumes for the game, somewhat like the cup for a golf hole. However, the present

game does not utilize spherical balls, nor does it involve any additional equipment (clubs, etc.), as required in golf. The equipment required for the present tossing game is extremely compact and lightweight, and may be easily carried to a vacation destination in a small car, light aircraft, or other vehicle of limited luggage capacity, and yet offers the same degree of enjoyment as provided by many other tossing games which require considerably heavier and bulkier equipment for play.

A discussion of the related art of which the present inventor is aware, and its differences and distinctions from the present invention, is presented below.

U.S. Patent No. 1,193,040 issued on August 1, 1916 to William J. Martin, titled "Quoit," describes a horseshoe-shaped and sized tossing object, for tossing at a stake-type target. Martin provides improved balance for his horseshoe, but the size and shape are incompatible with the relatively small diameter receptacles used as the targets in the present tossing game.

U.S. Patent No. 1,646,627 issued on October 25, 1927 to Orren P. Mossman et al., titled "Horseshoe," describes a modification of the conventional horseshoe shape, by adding inwardly turned projections at the trailing or open ends of the shoe. These projections tend to catch on the stake, and reduce the chances of the shoe bouncing off the stake after it has been

tossed. Mossman et al. provide various other improvements to a pitching horseshoe, but none of their improvements, nor the general concept of the horseshoe itself, are adaptable for use as a tossing object to lodge in the recessed target receptacles of the present game.

U.S. Patent No. 1,933,850 issued on November 7, 1933 to John A. Gordon, titled "Pitching Horseshoes," describes further embellishments to a pitching horseshoe, with the goal being to provide a higher likelihood of the shoe catching on the stake or peg. Again, such horseshoes are not compatible with the recessed targets of the present tossing game.

U.S. Patent No. 2,059,378 issued on November 3, 1936 to William F. Madison, titled "Four-Point Pitching Horseshoe," describes yet another modification of the conventional horseshoe configuration, with the goal being to increase the likelihood of the shoe catching on the stake or peg. The same points raised above regarding the incompatibility of the general horseshoe configuration with the relatively small diameter recessed targets of the present tossing game, are seen to apply here as well.

U.S. Patent No. 3,742,643 issued on July 3, 1973 to Charles D. Keith, titled "Flying Device," describes a generally toroidally shaped object with a series of radially disposed

vanes in the center. The vanes pivot spanwise on a series of radially disposed axes, and may be adjusted in pitch or angle of incidence to adjust the flight characteristics of the device. The Keith device is much too large to be adapted for use with the present tossing game, with its relatively small (preferably on the order of three inches in diameter) target receptacles.

U.S. Patent No. 3,765,122 issued on October 16, 1973 to Roy English, titled "Flying Toy," describes a ring-shaped device wherein the ring has at least a crude airfoil shaped cross section. English states that this provides better flight characteristics for the device. While the English device is a toroidal disc, as are the washers used with the present game, the diameter of the English device is clearly much too large to be used with the targets of the present tossing game, as evidenced by the environmental view of Fig. 1 of the English patent.

U.S. Patent No. 3,977,678 issued on August 31, 1976 to Martha T. Hedberg, titled "Ring Toss Apparatus Using Biological Symbols," describes a game in which the conventional male and female symbols, i.e., rings with radial projections extending therefrom and respectively having an arrow and a cross at their distal ends, are used respectively as the stake or peg and as the quoits in a tossing game. No buried cup or receptacle is

provided by Hedberg for her game, nor are any rules or scoring system provided.

U.S. Patent No. 4,063,382 issued on December 20, 1977 to David F. McCallum, titled "Throw Ring," describes a toroidally shaped device with a series of inwardly projecting airfoils. As is clear from Fig. 1 of McCallum, the device is much too large for use with the target canisters of the present game. The McCallum device relates more closely to the tossing devices of the '643 and '122 U.S. Patents, respectively issued to Keith and English and discussed further above, than it does to the present tossing game.

U.S. Patent No. 4,120,499 issued on October 17, 1978 to Anthony N. Stazzone, titled "Ring Toss Game Device," describes a game with a triangular base and a series of removable pegs for installation in the base. The object is to toss rings so that they land and catch on the various pegs on the base. While Stazzone also provides a set of rules and a scoring system for his game, his game actually teaches away from the present tossing game, with its relatively smaller tossing objects which are adapted to be tossed into a relatively larger diameter receptacle.

U.S. Patent No. 4,132,410 issued on January 2, 1979 to Anthony R. Montagna, titled "Ring Toss Game With Swivel Collar,"

describes a game having an upwardly projecting stake with a series of radial arms, with one of the arms swiveling on the stake. A series of toroidal rings are provided for tossing, with the object being to catch the rings on one of the arms, or to get the rings past the arms to the bottom of the stake. As in the other ring-type tossing games discussed above, the Montagna rings cannot be used with the relatively small diameter target receptacles of the present game.

U.S. Patent No. 4,180,266 issued on December 25, 1979 to Fernand Morin et al., titled "Ring Toss Game," describes a game in which the target comprises a series of sharpened vertical stakes, each having a different value when a ring lands therearound. The Morin et al. game essentially teaches away from the present tossing game, due to its requirement for relatively large rings which encircle one or more of the target stakes, rather than a relatively larger target receptacle into which objects are tossed.

U.S. Patent No. 4,531,745 issued on July 30, 1985 to Donald E. Leidy, titled "Three For All Rope Ring Toss Device," describes a quoit type game in which the quoits comprise a series of three rings which are joined together at a single common point about their circumferences. The general object of the Leidy game is to toss the multiple ring quoit to catch upon

a peg or stake, rather than to toss a smaller diameter object to land within a larger diameter target receptacle, as in the present game.

5 U.S. Patent No. 4,898,392 issued on February 6, 1990 to Louis D. Goletz, titled "Combined Ring Toss And Ball Roll Games," describes an apparatus comprising a pair of stakes, which may be mounted on support bases or driven into the ground. Quoits or rings are provided for tossing over the stakes, as in many such games. The rings may also be secured together and
10 used as targets for the tossing of balls, if desired. As in the other ring toss type games of which the present inventor is aware, the Goletz game requires that the rings be tossed over a stake, rather than into a receptacle.

15 U.S. Patent No. 4,982,966 issued on January 8, 1991 to William J. Teafatiller, titled "Ring Toss Game Apparatus," describes a portable game comprising a box with separable base and lid components. A target cylinder is installed in or on the base and lid, and the base and lid are separated to serve as targets for a tossing game involving the use of relatively small
20 diameter rings, which are tossed toward the target cylinders. The Teafatiller game differs from the present game, in that Teafatiller requires additional componentry in the form of the box portions, to which his target cylinders are attached.

Teafatiller does not provide for the burial of the targets into the ground, with their upper rims substantially flush with the surface, as is done with the target cylinders of the present game. This also affects the rules of play, as the upstanding rims of the Teafatiller cylinders preclude the possibility of one of the tossing rings straddling the target rim, which can happen when the rims of the targets are flush with the surrounding surface, as in the present game. Moreover, Teafatiller discloses the use of stakes within his target cylinders, which feature more closely resembles other stake-type ring and quoit toss games than it does the present game. In addition, Teafatiller does not address the need to differentiate between the tossing objects used by different players. In the present game, the different sets of washers or rings used by the different players are colored differently, so more than a single player may take his or her turn toward one target without confusion as to which washer is associated with which player.

U.S. Patent No. 5,067,727 issued on November 26, 1991 to Perry D. Crompton, titled "Ring Toss Game," describes another game having a pair of spaced apart stakes and a series of rings which are tossed toward the stakes. The Crompton game differs from others in using mating hook-and-loop material (e.g., Velcro®) to assist in adhering his rings to the target board, and

in the use of a flexible, "bean bag" type construction for his rings. No target receptacles nor means of differentiating between rings used by different players are provided by Crompton.

5 U.S. Patent No. 5,553,862 issued on September 10, 1996 to William Konotopsky, titled "Toss Game Apparatus," describes a flat target board having a central hole and supported along one edge by one of three grooves in a support block so that the board is inclined. One surface of the target board has a
10 relatively higher coefficient of friction to facilitate adhesion of the tossed objects. Konotopsky uses the cancellation scoring principle, in which identical scores by opponents cancel one another in each round. This scoring system is used by the NHPA (National Horseshoe Pitching Association); the present invention
15 uses a similar scoring system. Konotopsky also provides differently colored washers for each player, as is done in the present game. However, Konotopsky provides only a single target board, requiring players to make their tosses, proceed to the board, recover their washers, return to the appropriate mark,
20 and toss again. The two opposed targets of the present game double the amount of play which may be achieved, and moreover, the buried targets of the present game are unlike the Konotopsky target.

U.S. Patent No. 5,620,185 issued on April 15, 1997 to Harvey C. Robertson, titled "Ring Toss Game," describes a series of stakes or pins deployed to extend above the surface, with a plurality of toroidal discs for tossing toward the stakes. The Robertson discs are Frisbee® type devices, and utilize an aerodynamic principle rather than a purely ballistic toss, as is essentially the case with the present tossing game. Moreover, while Robertson provides plural targets, he groups those targets together, rather than placing two opposed targets at opposite ends of the playing field or range, as in the case of the present tossing game. No target receptacles, differently colored or marked tossing objects, or burial of the targets is disclosed by Robertson.

U.S. Patent No. 5,704,857 issued on January 6, 1998 to Johnny W. Davenport, titled "Horseshoe For Pitching," describes yet another variation on the basic horseshoe configuration, intended to provide certain advantages in horseshoe pitching and for storage of such shoes. No disclosure is made by Davenport of any form of buried target receptacles.

U.S. Patent No. 5,863,045 issued on January 26, 1999 to Lane V. Watson et al., titled "Score-Keeping Ring Toss Game," describes a game apparatus which somewhat resembles the apparatus of the '966 U.S. Patent to Teafatiller, discussed

further above. However, Watson et al. differs from Teafatiller and the present game in that Watson et al. provide only a single container with a single peg or stake in the center thereof, with the goal being to encircle the peg with a tossed ring. Watson et al. also provide only a single target, with the need for players to walk back and forth from the tossing position to the target at every round, rather than being able to move back and forth between two opposite targets, as in the present game. Moreover, Watson et al. include electronic scoring means with their game, which requires that the tossing rings have at least an electrically conductive surface. This precludes painting the rings to differentiate between players, as is done with the rings used in the present game. Moreover, the Watson et al. device would have no means to differentiate between rings tossed by opponents, and thus cannot use the cancellation scoring system used in the present game.

U.S. Patent No. 5,873,573 issued on February 23, 1999 to William H. Beatty, Jr., titled "Ring Toss Game With Bell Sounds," describes an apparatus more closely resembling the games of the Teafatiller '966 and '045 Watson et al. U.S. Patents, than it does the present game. Beatty, Jr. provides a hard, preferably metallic cylinder having a central spike and a series of hard, metallic rings. The object is to encircle the spike

with the rings when they are tossed. Beatty, Jr. states that the materials of which his game components are formed, produce a ringing sound when one of the rings strikes the target cylinder. The Beatty, Jr. cylinder cannot be buried in the ground, as the surrounding soil would dampen the acoustics of the cylinder, and the device would be incapable of producing any significant ringing sound. Moreover, Beatty, Jr. provides only a single target, and does not differentiate between rings tossed by different players.

U.S. Patent No. 5,938,202 issued on August 17, 1999 to Charles E. Williams, titled "Ring And Ball Tossing Game Apparatus And Method For Playing The Same," describes a game involving opposed stakes (rather than receptacles), with players first tossing a quoit or ring toward one of the stakes, and then tossing a ball toward the quoit or ring. Only a single ring and ball are provided, with players taking turns using the same two tossing objects. Thus, no differentiation between objects used by opposing players, is provided. The Williams game more closely resembles other games using a stake and rings tossed to encircle a stake.

U.S. Patent No. 6,135,455 issued on October 24, 2000 to Dennis R. McNally, titled "Disk Toss And Peg Game," describes a game with a single target area, a plurality of pegs extending

upwardly therefrom, and one or more aerodynamic discs. The single target area requires that players move back and forth from the throwing area to the target area for each round of play, rather than being able to play toward an opposite target area from each target area, as in the present game. Moreover, McNally does not provide buried target receptacles, as in the present game. The McNally game more closely resembles the game of the Morin et al. '266 U.S. Patent, discussed further above, than it does the present game.

U.S. Patent No. 6,237,918 issued on May 29, 2001 to Charles E. Williams, titled "Ring And Ball Tossing Game Apparatus And Method For Playing The Same," is a continuation of the issued '202 U.S. Patent to the same inventor, discussed further above. The same points made in that discussion, are seen to apply here as well.

U.S. Patent Publication No. 2001/35,613 published on November 1, 2001, titled "Disc Toss Game," describes a tossing game having an upraised target area with a central receptacle, and a series of discs or rings for tossing. The object is to toss the discs or rings into the central receptacle, with the concentrically surrounding receptacle having a lesser point value. The game targets are more closely related to the above grade target receptacles of the Teafatiller '966, Watson et al.

'045, and Beatty, Jr. '573 U.S. Patents, discussed further above, than to the buried target receptacles of the present tossing game.

5 U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/130,467 published on September 19, 2002, titled "Projectile Target Game Apparatus," describes a tossing game having a milk crate-like target, with a hole formed through its floor. The target rests upon the surface, but is tilted with the floor toward the player. The
10 tossing objects have weighted and rounded forward ends, with rearwardly extending handling sticks. The object is to toss the objects through the center hole of the target box. No washers or small discs, nor buried target receptacles, are provided by Woods.

15 U.S. Des. Patent No. 330,393 issued on October 20, 1992 to Rick D. Grant et al., titled "Illuminated Ring Toss Game," illustrates a design having a single upstanding column or stake, extending upwardly from a round base pedestal. No tossing objects are disclosed in the Grant et al. U.S. Design Patent.

20 U.S. Design Patent No. 415,533 issued on October 19, 1999 to Andrew W. Shost, Jr. et al., titled "Washer Toss Game," illustrates a design having an octagonal outer wall with a taller, square section central area. The design more closely resembles the target containers of the Teafatiller '966 and

Watson et al. '045 issued U.S. Patents and the '613 U.S. Patent Publication, all of which have been discussed further above, than it does the present tossing game apparatus.

U.S. Design Patent No. 428,061 issued on July 11, 2000 to James Billodeau et al., titled "Washer Toss Game," illustrates a design having a square outer wall, with a taller cylindrical receptacle secured therein by a series of diagonal arms. Differently colored washers are provided for the game. The Billodeau et al. design more closely resembles the target of the Teafatiller '966 and Watson et al. '045 issued U.S. Utility Patents, the Shost, Jr. et al. U.S. Design Patent, and the '613 U.S. Patent Publication, all of which have been discussed further above, than it does the present tossing game apparatus.

Finally, Canadian Patent Application Publication No. 2,180,194 published on December 29, 1997 to William Konotopsky, titled "Washer Toss Game," discloses the same game apparatus as that of the '862 U.S. Patent to the same inventor, discussed further above. The same points of distinction noted between that disclosure and the present invention, are seen to apply here as well.

None of the above inventions and patents, either singly or in combination, is seen to describe the instant invention as claimed.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

5 The present invention comprises a tossing game, including a pair of cylindrical target receptacles and four sets of small tossing objects, i.e., relatively large diameter steel washers or the like. The four sets of tossing objects are differentiated by color or in some other manner, so players may distinguish the objects of each set from one another. The target receptacles may be open-ended lengths of EMT (electrical
10 metal tubing), as used in electrical conduits and the like, PVC (polyvinyl chloride) plastic pipe, or other suitable material.

The two target cylinders or receptacles are buried in the ground at a predetermined distance apart, with their upper rims essentially at ground level. Players stand behind the first of
15 the two targets, and attempt to pitch their tossing objects into the opposite target receptacle. Points are awarded according to how close (or in) to the target receptacle the objects are tossed. Scoring is preferably in accordance with NHPA (American Horseshoe Pitching Association) rules, i.e., wherein tosses of
20 opposing players which would receive the same number of points cancel one another.

The present game is easily set up, with it being necessary only to form two small holes in the ground to install the two

target receptacles therein. The equipment needed is extremely light and compact for a physical game structure, and provides an ideal leisure time activity for play at the beach or other similar environments.

5 Accordingly, it is a principal object of the invention to provide a tossing game which utilizes a pair of opposed target receptacles which are buried in the ground, and a series of sets of tossing objects, with the sets being differentiated from one another for use by different players.

10 It is another object of the invention to provide a tossing game in which the target receptacles are preferably formed of open ended cylinders of metal or plastic, but which may be formed of other materials and shapes as desired, and in which the tossing objects comprise multiple sets of differently
15 colored washers.

 It is a further object of the invention to provide a method of play for a tossing game, comprising the burial of the target receptacles in the ground with their upper rims substantially level with the surface, taking turns tossing the objects from
20 one target receptacle to the opposite target receptacle, and scoring the game according to the accuracy of the tosses by the players.

Still another object of the invention is to provide a cancellation scoring system, wherein tosses by opposing players which score identical points, cancel one another.

It is an object of the invention to provide improved elements and arrangements thereof in an apparatus for the purposes described which is inexpensive, dependable and fully effective in accomplishing its intended purposes.

These and other objects of the present invention will become readily apparent upon further review of the following specification and drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is an environmental, perspective view showing the tossing game of the present invention, in play.

Fig. 2 is an environmental perspective view showing an exemplary placement of one of the target receptacles in the playing surface, and placement of two of the tossing objects therein.

Fig. 3 is a perspective view of four sets of exemplary tossing objects which may be used with the present game.

Fig. 4 is a flow chart describing the basic steps in the method of play of the present tossing game.

Similar reference characters denote corresponding features consistently throughout the attached drawings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

5 The present invention is a tossing game, in which opposing
players or teams attempt to toss objects into or near opposed,
spaced apart target receptacles which are buried or set into the
ground or playing surface. The present game is an outdoor game,
due to the necessity of providing holes in the ground or surface
for the installation of the target receptacles therein.
10 However, the present tossing game is suitable for play in just
about any location where a suitable playing field exists, and
where a pair of space apart target receptacle holes may be
formed in the field or surface. Suburban back yards, beaches,
campsites, picnic areas, and other outdoor areas with suitable
15 soil are all suitable areas for play of the present tossing
game.

Fig. 1 illustrates the basic configuration of the present
game, in which two players P1 and P2 are tossing objects 10 near
or into one of a pair of opposed target receptacles 12a and 12b,
20 which are buried or set into the ends E1 and E2 of the playing
field or surface S. The two target receptacles 12a and 12b are

separated by a sufficient distance D as to create a challenge for the players P1 and P2. The tossing distance D may be twenty-one feet for adult players, but may be shortened to sixteen feet for sub-teenage players, i.e., players aged twelve or younger. It will be seen that the distance D may be adjusted as desired to create a greater or lesser challenge, depending upon the age and skill levels of the players, in accordance with agreements made between players prior to the beginning of play. Different players may be allowed to use different distances D during the game, with younger or less skilled players being allowed to stand closer to the target receptacle.

The apparatus of the present game is extremely simple, comprising identical first and second target receptacles 12a and 12b, and a series of tossing objects 10. Fig. 2 of the drawings illustrates an exemplary target receptacle 12, which is shown buried or set into the playing surface S. The receptacle 12 comprises a rigid sleeve formed of EMT (electrical metal tubing), PVC (polyvinyl chloride), or other suitable material, as desired. Preferably, the receptacles 12 are cut from a length of cylindrical material to provide the round cross-sectional shape illustrated, but other cross-sectional shapes (e.g., rectangular, etc.) may be used as desired.

The target receptacles 12 are completely open throughout their lengths, having an open upper end 14 and an opposite open lower end 16, with the two ends 14 and 16 defining a target receptacle length 18 therebetween. The internal width or diameter 20 of the target receptacles 12, defines the open interior volume 22 which is used to receive accurately thrown or tossed objects 10 therein during play. Preferably, the width or diameter 20 of the target receptacles 12 is substantially three inches, to provide sufficient challenge without making the task too difficult. The three inch internal width or diameter is nominal, and standard pipe or tube external dimensions may be used accordingly. Other sizes may be substituted as desired, depending upon the degree of difficulty desired for the game. The length 18 of the target receptacles 12 is also preferably about three inches. This is sufficient to provide adequate depth to capture an accurately tossed object 10 therein, without being inordinately long.

The target receptacles 12 are buried or set into the first and second ends E1 and E2 of the playing surface S, as shown in Fig. 1, with their upper ends 14 set substantially flush or level with the playing surface S. The material contained in the holes provided for the target receptacles 12 is removed, leaving an open interior volume 22 for the reception of objects 10

tossed therein, generally as shown in detail in Fig. 2 of the drawings.

It will be noted that a pair of tossing objects 10 are located in the bottom of the target receptacle 12, in Fig. 2.

5 Fig. 3 provides a detailed illustration of a series of such tossing objects. While only a single set or group of tossing objects 10 is required, as shown generally in Figs. 1 and 2, preferably at least two sets are provided, with some means of differentiating the objects of one set from another. Fig. 3
10 illustrates a series of four sets of tossing objects, designated as objects 10a, 10b, 10c, and 10d for the respective sets. Each set preferably includes a series of objects therein. While only two such objects are shown for each of the sets of Fig. 3, it is preferred that four such objects be provided in each set, to
15 allow a larger number of tosses to be completed by each player or team at each turn or round.

The objects of each set may be differentiated from one another by color, as shown in Fig. 3, with the objects 10a being colored red, the objects 10b colored white, the objects 10c
20 colored blue, and the objects 10d colored yellow. These colors are exemplary, and any colors may be used as desired. The colors are preferably applied by painting the objects 10, although other coatings (tape, etc.) may be used if so desired.

Paint is preferable, due to the relatively low friction surface provided. Other means of differentiating the objects 10 of each set from one another may be provided if so desired, e.g., different shapes, etc., but this is not preferred, as altering the shapes of the objects may affect their flight during the toss, and/or their action upon striking the playing surface.

The tossing objects 10a through 10d may be any suitably durable article with appropriate flight characteristics for tossing over a relatively short distance. Flat, rigid discs such as relatively large steel washers have been found to work well for use as the tossing objects of the present game. The tossing objects or washers 10a through 10d preferably have a maximum diameter 24 of substantially two inches, in order to be somewhat smaller than the nominal three inch diameter or width 20 of the target receptacles 12. However, other diameters or widths may be selected for the tossing objects 10, as desired, so long as the selected maximum diameter or width 24 of the tossing objects 10 is smaller than the minimum width 20 of the target receptacles 12, in order to allow the tossing objects 10 to drop into the interior 22 of the target receptacle 12 when tossed therein.

Fig. 4 provides a very basic flow chart which very generally describes the major steps in the method of play of the

present tossing game. Initially, the players or participants select a suitable playing field or surface, suitable for the minor digging required for placement of the target receptacles in the ground. Obviously, the surface must be sufficiently soft to allow two small holes to be dug out, and if the game is to be played on public property, rules must allow the two holes to be dug for placement of the receptacles therein. The playing surface must be sufficiently large to allow separation of the two receptacles at the opposite ends of the field. A typical urban or suburban back yard provides sufficient size for play of the present game.

The desired distance, e.g., twenty one feet, is measured between the location of the first receptacle or cup 12a and the opposite receptacle or cup 12b, by formal measurement, pacing off the distance, or other means as desired. First and second holes are dug in the playing surface to a depth sufficient to bury or set the two receptacles or cups therein, with the upper rims or ends of the receptacles being placed level or flush with the playing surface, and with any material within the internal volumes of the two receptacles being removed to allow the internal volumes of the receptacles to remain open. This series of steps is indicated generally by the first instruction 100 of Fig. 4.

At this point, the players or opponents in the game may be selected or determined, if this has not been previously done, and the maximum score for the game may be determined, if not previously agreed upon. Preferably, each object tossed into the opposite receptacle is counted as five points, with an object resting over a portion of the upper rim of the receptacle counted as three points and those objects closest to the receptacle (but not over the upper edge) counted as one point. The winner may be the first player or team to reach twenty one points, but other end game score counts and/or point values for the above described situations may be provided or agreed upon as desired. Order of play is determined by each player making a qualifying toss of a single object from one receptacle toward the opposite receptacle, with the order of proximity of these tosses determining the order of play. Object color may also be selected according to the qualifying tosses.

The first tossing player positions himself or herself adjacent the first receptacle, to the side opposite the second receptacle, i.e., with the first receptacle between the player and the second receptacle. This separates the tossing player from the second receptacle by the predetermined distance measured between the two receptacles, as desired for play. The tossing player then tosses his or her objects toward the

opposite cup or receptacle, preferably tossing all of his or her objects (e.g., four) in sequence during his or her turn. The next player then positions himself or herself as described above to become the tossing player, and repeats the process with his or her objects. This process continues, until all players or teams have made their tosses from the first receptacle or cup to the second receptacle or cup, generally as shown by the second instructional step 102 of Fig. 4.

The players then move from the first receptacle to the second receptacle, and examine the positions of their respective tossing objects. Scoring 104 is in accordance with the proximity of the objects to the target receptacle, with points awarded as described further above. However, the present game may use the cancellation scoring system in accordance with the system used by the National Horseshoe Pitchers Association (NHPA). In this system, identically valued scores of objects tossed by opposing players, cancel one another. As an example, assume that the two objects 10 shown in the bottom of the receptacle 12 of Fig. 2, were tossed by two opposing players. The five point value of each would be canceled by the other, and no points would be awarded to either player.

As a further example of the scoring of the present game, let us assume that two players toss four washers or objects

each, with each player tossing a first object into the cup or receptacle, as shown in Fig. 2, each player tossing a second object which overhangs the edge of the cup, and each player tossing third and fourth objects which come to rest near the cup, but with both of the first player's third and fourth objects closer to the cup than either of the second player's outlying third and fourth objects. In this example, the five points for the first objects alighting in the cup would cancel, as described above, with neither player gaining any points for these tosses. The two second objects resting on the edge of the cup would also cancel one another; again, no points would be awarded to either player for these tosses. However, the third and fourth objects of the first player would be closer to the cup than the third and fourth objects of the second player. Thus, the first player would be awarded two points for this round. If only one of the first player's objects was closer than any of the second player's objects, then the first player would be awarded only a single point for this round.

Play resumes after recovery of the tossing objects or washers, with the first player positioning himself or herself to the side of the second receptacle and opposite the first receptacle, i.e., with the second receptacle between the tossing player and the first receptacle. Play continues with the first

player tossing his or her objects toward the first target receptacle, and subsequent players taking their turns in the same manner.

5 When all players have completed their tosses from the second target receptacle or cup, to the first receptacle or cup, they return to the first receptacle or cup to check the positions of their tossing objects or washers, as was done after the first round of tosses from the first receptacle or cup to the second receptacle or cup, and described above. Scoring is
10 accomplished in the same manner, and play continues, with players moving back and forth between the two cups or receptacles as they toss their objects or washers back and forth between the two. When one of the players or teams reaches the previously agreed upon score for winning the game, e.g., twenty
15 one points, that player or team wins the game.

In conclusion, the present tossing game provides a very simple and economical apparatus for a simple outdoor sport which may be enjoyed by participants of virtually any age and physical condition. The present game is easily set up in virtually any
20 outdoor location, with the only requirement being the forming of two holes in the ground for the two target receptacles or cups. The present game may be used to fill a few minutes of leisure time, or may be expanded to use an entire morning or afternoon,

depending upon the time available for the participants. The apparatus of the present game is readily transportable and requires little storage room, thus enabling the game to be taken to the beach, outdoor parties, camping trips, or wherever such a game might be enjoyed.

It is to be understood that the present invention is not limited to the embodiments described above, but encompasses any and all embodiments within the scope of the following claims.